

Local Food Action Initiative

Seattle City Councilmember Richard Conlin



What is the Initiative?

The Local Food Action Initiative establishes goals, creates a policy framework, and identifies specific actions to strengthen Seattle and the region's food system in a sustainable and secure way. Resolution 31019, passed by the Seattle City Council in April 2008, outlines the Initiative. It aims to improve the local and regional food system, and in doing so, advance the City of Seattle's interrelated goals of race and social justice, environmental sustainability, economic development, and emergency preparedness.

Highlights

The City and community partners have taken action to meet the Initiative's ten goals. Highlights include:

Grow and Eat

- Declaring 2010 as the Year of Urban Agriculture, engaging the public, providing resources, and encouraging people to grow food.
- Adding \$2 million to the Parks Levy to expand the City's P-Patch community garden program.
- Converting the seven acre, City-owned Atlantic Street Nursery into Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetlands.

Collaborate

- Establishing a Regional Food Policy Council at the Puget Sound Regional Council.
- Supporting the development of a coordinated work plan among various City departments through the City's Food Systems Interdepartmental Team.

Environment and Waste

- Modifying the Seattle Green Factor by offering a bonus for food production, including green roofs.
- Mandating that multi-family housing units provide food waste collection service for tenants.
- Starting development of a Transfer of Development Rights agreement with King County to protect farms that provide produce in Seattle farmers markets.

Healthy Food for All

- Working with the King County Board of Health to adopt healthy food guidelines for vending machines.
- Establishing a farmers market at City Hall.

Policies and Plans

- Developing the Seattle Farm Bill Principles and encouraging local governments and partners to advocate for appropriate policy in the federal Farm Bill's renewal.
- Adopting land use code changes for community gardens, urban agriculture, farmers markets, and small/mid-sized grocery stores.
- Assisting neighborhoods to include community food planning in the neighborhood plan process.

Strengthen Our Local Economy

- Offering business incentives and assistance to increase the amount of healthy food available in corner stores.
- Developing an urban agriculture business directory.



See the Local Food Action Initiative website at
http://www.seattle.gov/council/conlin/food_initiative/

See the City of Seattle
food page at
<http://www.seattle.gov/food>

Why was it created?

Access to food is one of the most fundamental needs of a community, yet local government involvement in addressing and assuring access to food is often poorly addressed. An increased number of local municipalities are beginning to realize the impact that the U.S. food system—characterized by heavy reliance on chemicals, increased processing of foods, long transportation times, and inequitable access to fresh food, particularly for low-income people—is having on health, local food security, hunger, emergency preparedness, climate protection, and economic development.

Local Food Action Initiative Goals

- 1 Strengthen community and regional food systems
- 2 Assess and mitigate negative environmental and ecological impacts
- 3 Encourage the use of renewable energy resources and minimize energy waste
- 4 Stimulate demand for healthy foods, especially in low-income communities
- 5 Increase access to healthy and local food for all of Seattle's residents
- 6 Integrate food system planning and policies into City activities
- 7 Enhance partnerships within the City and across the region
- 8 Establish a strong interdepartmental focus among City departments
- 9 Support procurement policies favoring local and regional sourcing
- 10 Enhance emergency preparedness around food access and distribution

Get Involved!

- Grow your own food in your backyard or at a **P-Patch community garden**: www.seattle.gov/Neighborhoods/ppatch/.
- Join a **Community Supported Agriculture** program or find a farm nearby: www.pugetsoundfresh.org/.
- Get involved in classes and activities to grow, share, eat, cook, and recycle food with Seattle Parks & Recreation's **Parks Urban Food Systems programs**: www.seattle.gov/parks/pufs/.
- Find a **farmers market** in your neighborhood: <http://seattlefarmersmarkets.org>.
- Learn about food-related news, events, organizations, and local businesses at urbanfarmhub.org.
- The U.S. Farm Bill impacts our work to create a sustainable food system that promotes health, reduces hunger, and supports regional economic security. Sign on to the **Seattle Farm Bill Principles** and spread the word, at seattlefarmbillprinciples.org.
- Attend a **Regional Food Policy Council** meeting on the second Friday of each month. More details at www.psrc.org/about/advisory/regional-food-policy-council/.
- Read **Richard Conlin's blog posts** on food policy at conlin.seattle.gov/category/food-policy/.

